

**CLAIMS:**

1. (cancelled)
2. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13 wherein:  
said apparatus includes an electronic serial number.
3. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 2 wherein:  
said electronic serial number is located on an RFID circuit, and  
said electronic serial number is permanently set at the time of manufacture of said  
RFID circuit.
4. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13 wherein:  
said memory is an RFID circuit.
5. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 4 wherein:  
said RFID circuit is operable as a transmitter.
6. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 4 wherein:  
said RFID circuit is operable as a receiver.
7. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13 wherein:  
said processor means further comprises an encryption function for encrypting  
machine readable symbol data decoded by said processor.
8. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 7 wherein:  
said encryption function is a translation table.
9. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 7 wherein:  
said encryption function is a mathematical algorithm.
10. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 7 wherein:  
said encryption function is configurable.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus method of claim 13 wherein:  
said scanning means comprises an optical sensor/receiver, and a lens to focus optical signals.
12. (currently amended) The apparatus method of claim 11 wherein:  
said scanning means further comprises an emitter.
13. (currently amended) A The method of claim 65 wherein the mobile machine readable data acquisition apparatus comprising comprises:
  - a housing,
  - a power means,
  - a scanning means for scanning a machine readable symbology,
  - a digitizer means receiving input from said scanning means and outputting a digital input signal for
  - a processor means having a machine readable symbology identification and decoding function which is linked to
  - a memory means for local data storage;said scanning means, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means,
  - said scanning means ~~further~~ comprises
  - an optical sensor/receiver,
  - a lens to focus optical signals, and
  - an aperture between said lens and said optical sensor/receiver.
14. (currently amended) The apparatus method of claim 13 wherein:  
said scanning means has a depth of field which enables the scanning of symbologies located within a Compact Disc case through said Compact Disc case.
15. (currently amended) The apparatus method of claim 13 wherein:  
said aperture is a slit, enabling uni-directional scanning.
16. (currently amended) The apparatus method of claim 13 wherein:  
said aperture has a cross or star form, enabling bi-directional scanning.

17. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13 wherein:  
said aperture has a circle, ellipsoid or rectangular form, enabling omni-directional scanning.
18. (currently amended) ~~A mobile machine readable data acquisition apparatus comprising:~~  
~~a housing,~~  
~~a power means,~~  
~~a scanning means for scanning a machine readable symbology, said scanning means comprising an emitter,~~  
~~a digitizer means receiving input from said scanning means and outputting a digital input signal for~~  
~~a processor means having a machine readable symbology identification and decoding function which is linked to~~  
~~a memory means for local data storage, and~~  
The method of claim 12 wherein the apparatus has a download means for  
downloading decoded machine readable symbols stored in said memory;  
~~said scanning means, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means.~~
19. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 18 wherein:  
said download means is via modulation of emitter.
20. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 18 wherein:  
said download means is via an electro-mechanical connection.
21. – 52. (cancelled)
53. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 18 wherein:  
said download means is via an RFID.
54. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13 wherein:  
said apparatus has a total weight of 20 grams or less.

55. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus method~~ of claim 13 wherein:

said apparatus further comprises at least one switch, said switch operable to initiate an apparatus function with a single actuation, without requiring continued actuation of said switch.

56. – 64. (cancelled)

65. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 64~~ A method for transferring data between a mobile data acquisition apparatus and a host computer, comprising the steps of:

connecting a mobile data acquisition apparatus with a docking device connected to a host computer between a host computer keyboard port and a host computer keyboard;

activating said apparatus, whereby said apparatus transmits a signal indicating the presence of said apparatus to said docking device;

said docking device senses said signal from said apparatus and transmits a hot key interrupt sequence to said host computer;

a software running on said host computer, monitoring said host computer keyboard port transmits a status indicator signal to said docking device;

said docking device transmits an acknowledgement signal to said apparatus;

said apparatus transmits an information record, indicating the number of data records stored in a mobile data acquisition apparatus memory;

said apparatus transmits said data records to said docking device which passes said data records to said software application running on said host computer;

said software counts the number of said records;

if the number of said records is equal to said information record said software transmits a successful transfer signal to said docking device which passes said signal to said apparatus

wherein: said apparatus and or said docking device send empty records to indicate an end of record transmission.

66. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 64~~ A method for transferring data between a mobile data acquisition apparatus and a host computer, comprising the steps of:

connecting a mobile data acquisition apparatus with a docking device connected to a host computer between a host computer keyboard port and a host computer keyboard;

activating said apparatus, whereby said apparatus transmits a signal indicating the presence of said apparatus to said docking device;  
said docking device senses said signal from said apparatus and transmits a hot key interrupt sequence to said host computer;  
a software running on said host computer, monitoring said host computer keyboard port transmits a status indicator signal to said docking device;  
said docking device transmits an acknowledgement signal to said apparatus;  
said apparatus transmits an information record, indicating the number of data records stored in a mobile data acquisition apparatus memory;  
said apparatus transmits said data records to said docking device which passes said data records to said software application running on said host computer;  
said software counts the number of said records;  
if the number of said records is equal to said information record said software transmits a successful transfer signal to said docking device which passes said signal to said apparatus wherein: upon receipt of said successful transfer signal said apparatus clears said mobile data acquisition apparatus memory.

67. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 64~~ A method for transferring data between a mobile data acquisition apparatus and a host computer, comprising the steps of:  
connecting a mobile data acquisition apparatus with a docking device connected to a host computer between a host computer keyboard port and a host computer keyboard;  
activating said apparatus, whereby said apparatus transmits a signal indicating the presence of said apparatus to said docking device;  
said docking device senses said signal from said apparatus and transmits a hot key interrupt sequence to said host computer;  
a software running on said host computer, monitoring said host computer keyboard port transmits a status indicator signal to said docking device;  
said docking device transmits an acknowledgement signal to said apparatus;  
said apparatus transmits an information record, indicating the number of data records stored in a mobile data acquisition apparatus memory;  
said apparatus transmits said data records to said docking device which passes said data records to said software application running on said host computer;

said software counts the number of said records;

if the number of said records is equal to said information record said software transmits a successful transfer signal to said docking device which passes said signal to said apparatus

wherein: said data records are transmitted from said apparatus in encrypted form,  
and

said data records are unencrypted by said software running on said host computer.

68. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 64~~ A method for transferring data between a mobile data acquisition apparatus and a host computer, comprising the steps of:

connecting a mobile data acquisition apparatus with a docking device connected to a host computer between a host computer keyboard port and a host computer keyboard;

activating said apparatus, whereby said apparatus transmits a signal indicating the presence of said apparatus to said docking device;

said docking device senses said signal from said apparatus and transmits a hot key interrupt sequence to said host computer;

a software running on said host computer, monitoring said host computer keyboard port transmits a status indicator signal to said docking device;

said docking device transmits an acknowledgement signal to said apparatus;

said apparatus transmits an information record, indicating the number of data records stored in a mobile data acquisition apparatus memory;

said apparatus transmits said data records to said docking device which passes said data records to said software application running on said host computer;

said software counts the number of said records;

if the number of said records is equal to said information record said software transmits a successful transfer signal to said docking device which passes said signal to said apparatus

wherein: an apparatus identification code downloaded.

69. (cancelled)

70. (currently amended) ~~The key of claim 69,~~ A re-configurable electronic key, comprising: a housing,

a power means,

a scanning means for scanning a machine readable symbology, said scanning means comprising a lens to focus optical signals and an aperture between said lens and a sensor/receiver,

a digitizer means receiving input from said scanning means and outputting a digital input signal for

a processor means having a machine readable symbology decoding function which is linked to

a memory means for local data storage;

an output means, for outputting a stored key sequence,

said scanning means, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means,

said key configurable by scanning a machine readable symbology

wherein: said scanning means is an optical scanner; and said output means is an optical emitter.

71. (cancelled)

72. (currently amended) The key of claim 69 70, further comprising:

an electronic serial number.

73. (currently amended) A method for using an electronic key, comprising the steps of:

associating an access right with a user;

scanning a symbology describing said access right into an electronic key;

said electronic key comprising:

a housing,

a power means,

an optical scanner for scanning a machine readable symbology, said optical scanner comprising a lens to focus optical signals and an aperture between said lens and a sensor/receiver,

a digitizer means receiving input from said optical scanner and outputting a digital input signal for

a processor means having a machine readable symbology decoding function which is linked to

a memory means for local data storage;

an optical emitter, for outputting a stored key sequence,

said optical scanner, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means,

said key configurable by scanning a machine readable symbology,

providing said key to said user;

allowing access to said user upon said users downloading of a memory in said electronic key containing said access right; and

transmitting said symbology from a remote location for said user to scan into said key upon receipt.

74. (new) The method of claim 73 further including the steps of:

associating a serial number with said symbology;

allowing access only if said key contains an electronic serial number matching said serial number.

75. (cancelled)

76. (currently amended) A system for acquiring information, comprising:

a mobile data acquisition apparatus with a scanning means for reading a machine readable symbology and a memory means, said data acquisition device comprising:

a housing,

a power means,

a scanning means for scanning a machine readable symbology,

a digitizer means receiving input from said scanning means and outputting a digital input signal for

a processor means having a machine readable symbology identification and decoding function which is linked to

a memory means for local data storage;



said scanning means, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means.

said scanning means comprises: an optical sensor/receiver, a lens to focus optical signals, and an aperture between said lens and said optical sensor/receiver, a host computer means with a connection to a remote information source;

a communication means for information transfer between said apparatus storage means and said host computer means;

said apparatus arranged and configured to use said scanning means for scanning a machine readable symbology;

said symbology identifying an object for which information is desired; and

said host computer arranged and configured to receive information from said remote information source associated with said symbology The system of claim 75 wherein:

said apparatus further comprises

a housing,

a power means,

a digitizer means receiving input from said scanning means and outputting a digital input signal for

a processor means having a machine readable symbology identification and decoding function which is linked to said memory means;

said scanning means, said digitizer means, said processor means, said memory means and said power means arranged and configured within said housing, adapted to be energized by said power means.

77. (currently amended) The system of claim ~~75~~ 76, wherein:

said apparatus and said host computer means are integrated into a cellular telephone.

78. (currently amended) The ~~apparatus~~ method of claim 13, wherein

said apparatus has a volume of 14 cubic centimeters or less.

79. (new) The method of claim 65 wherein upon receipt of said successful transfer signal said apparatus clears said mobile data acquisition apparatus memory.

80. (new) The method of claim 65 wherein said data records are transmitted from said apparatus in encrypted form and said data records are unencrypted by said software running on said host computer.

81. (new) The method of claim 65 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

82. (new) The method of claim 79 wherein said data records are transmitted from said apparatus in encrypted form and said data records are unencrypted by said software running on said host computer.

83. (new) The method of claim 79 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

84. (new) The method of claim 80 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

85. (new) The method of claim 83 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

86. (new) The method of claim 66 wherein said data records are transmitted from said apparatus in encrypted form and said data records are unencrypted by said software running on said host computer.

87. (new) The method of claim 66 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

88. (new) The method of claim 86 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.

89. (new) The method of claim 67 wherein an apparatus identification code downloaded.